



Seattle Human Rights Commission

1963 – 2013 · 50 years of championing human rights and fostering a just future

Statement of the Seattle Human Rights Commission

Port Security Surveillance Camera Project

City Council Committee on Public Safety, Civil Rights & Technology February 20, 2013

Good afternoon Chairman Harrell and Committee members. The Seattle Human Rights Commission would like to thank you for holding this hearing on the Port Security Camera Network.



A new Port Security Camera

As reported, the 30 wireless camera network was funded with a \$5 million U.S. Department of Homeland Security grant in order to monitor and protect Seattle's Port and waterways from terrorist attacks. In addition, the cameras have been placed in residential waterfront neighborhoods and downtown Seattle. The Commission believes that the City government must use surveillance in a manner consistent with the fundamental human rights to privacy, due process, redress, and freedom of association.

Thus, we strongly support your commitment to draft legislation that will prevent the cameras from operating in residential zones and disabling the 360 degree feature to prevent the cameras from viewing any residential buildings. We urge the Committee and the City Council to include strong human rights protections in the legislation and would be glad to work with you in that effort. The City has committed to upholding human rights through Council Resolution Number 31420 (Dec. 10, 2012).

The right to privacy is a basic human right that includes the general right to be free from State intervention. The right also includes the right to anonymity which is the principle that people should be able to remain anonymous while exercising certain other protected rights even in public spaces. The right to privacy is contained in both Article 12 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and Article 17 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). The rights to due process and an effective remedy are found in Articles 8, 10, and 11 of the UDHR and Articles 2 and 14 of the ICCPR.

While the majority of cameras will be installed on the waterfront, we are concerned that a map of the camera locations shows that four cameras will be operating well away from the waterfront. These cameras are located downtown. We ask the City to reconsider its decision to install these cameras and any others located away from the waterfront. And regardless of their location, these cameras should only be used in accordance with established policies and procedures that have been developed after the public has had an opportunity to review the proposed rules and provide input.

Thank you for your consideration of our views and for addressing this important issue. We would be glad to assist in the preparation of legislation. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact Felicia Yearwood at felicia.yearwood@seattle.gov or (206) 684-4537.